

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2535

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 4106

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, JM, US

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION LEADER ON AGEE VISIT AND ELECTION PROSPECTS

1. OPPOSITION LEADER EDDIE SEAGA CALLED ON ME
SEPTEMBER 21. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS RELATING TO
LOCAL POLITICAL SCENE, INCLUDING THE AGEE AFFAIR.

A. HE IS STILL VERY MUCH ON THE UP-BEAT, BUT IN A
SERIOUS AND CONSIDERED MANNER.

B. HE IS INCREASINGLY CONFIDENT IN HIS ABILITY TO WIN
THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS.

C. HE THINKS MANLEY WILL NOT PUSH THE AGEE THEME
FURTHER, THOUGH THE ANTI-CIA LINE WILL PERSIST
THROUGHOUT CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING SHOWING OF GRENADA FILM:
"THE RISE AND FALL OF THE CIA."

D. HE WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO GET HOLD OF A BBC
DOCUMENTARY ON THE KGB HE HAS HEARD OF, OR OTHER SIMILAR
SIMILAR MATERIAL TO SHOW IN THE COUNTRY TOWNS.

E. HE IS MUCH ENCOURAGED BY HIS RECEPTION IN PNP STRONGHOLDS.

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THERE HAVE BEEN NO HOSTILE MANIFESTATIONS IN ANY HE HAS

VISITED.

F. HE WOULD HOPE VERY MUCH THAT MANLEY'S INVOLVEMENT WITH CIA IN THE OVERTHROW OF CHEDDI JAGAN -- OF WHICH HE IS CONVINCED -- COULD SURFACE AT SOME POINT.

G. HE WILL NOT GO TO WASHINGTON BEFORE ELECTIONS, WHICH HE THINKS WILL BE IN JANUARY -- AS SOON AS PNP CAN GET THE NEW ELECTION BOUNDARIES STRAIGHTENED OUT AND MINIMUMALLY ORGANIZED. THEY WILL NOT DELAY ANY LONGER THAN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY BECAUSE OF DETERIORATING ECONOMY.

H. SEAGA MIGHT GO TO MIAMI AT END OF OCTOBER, HOPEFULLY TO CONFER WITH SOME CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES. (HE WAS NOT CLEAR AS TO WHETHER HE HOPES WE MIGHT ARRANGE THIS, BUT I DID NOT PRESS HIM AS I DOUBT WHETHER VISIT WILL TAKE PLACE.)

I. HE HIMSELF HAD DECIDED NOT TO MAKE ANY STATEMENTS ON THE AGEE BUSINESS, AS HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE (FOR WHICH I THANKED HIM). HE SAID THAT HE THOUGH AGEE AFFAIR ALSO WAS NOT GOOD POLITICS FOR MANLEY -- "THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT THIS SORT OF THING IN THE COUNTRY PARTS."

J. HE DOES NOT FEEL THAT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY POWERS WILL MATERIALLY AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS. HE THOUGHT THAT A LITTLE INTIMIDATION MIGHT BE TRIED IN A FEW PLACES BUT WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE EXISTING SYSTEM WOULD PROVIDE A FAIR COUNT WHICH COULD NOT EFFECTIVELY BE TAMPERED WITH.

K. HE CONTINUES TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE IF HE DOES WIN. "SOMETHING WILL HAVE TO BE DONE TO GET SOME MONEY IN THE POCKETS OF THE PEOPLE." SHORTAGES OF FOOD ARE SHOWING UP, AND AN ASTONISHING NUMBER (UP TO 50 PERCENT) OF THE LITTLE COUNTRY STORES HAVE CLOSED DOWN.

1) HE IS WORKING ON A MANIFESTO IN WHICH HIS PLANS WILL BE LAID OUT IN OUTLINE. HE THEREFORE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS WITH AID AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY HOPED, BUT HE
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HAS "A NEW GIRL" WHO IS COMPETENT IN THE PLANNING FIELD AND HE WOULD HOPE TO HAVE HER CONTACT US.

M. IN SHORT, THOUGH HE IS LABORING UNDER NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT HIS TASK, BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE, HE STRIKES ME AS BEING AGAIN CONFIDENT IN HIS ABILITY TO GET THE JOB DONE.

N. I ASSURED HIM THAT IF HE IS ELECTED, WE WOULD LOOK

FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH HIM. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE NOT ONLY WISHED TO BUT SAW NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE.

2. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT SEAGA IS A BIT TOO SANGUINE REGARDING BOTH HIS PARTY'S ELECTORAL PROSPECTS, AND ON THE IMPACT OF THE AGEE AFFAIR AND THE DESTABILIZATION CHARADE. WE ASSUME THAT MANLEY'S FIRST AND DRIVING IMPERATIVE IS RETENTION OF POWER, THT HE BELIEVES THIS REQUIRES THOROUGH MANIPULATION OF THE DESTABILIZATION GAME IN THE COMING MONTHS AHEAD -- INCLUDING (BY INUENDO OR OTHERWISE) ESTABLISHMENT OF LINKS BETWEEN THE JLP OPPOSITION AND THE "SINISTER EXTERNAL FORCES" OF IMPERIALISM AND CAPITALISM. (A SEPTEL DETAILS OUR THOUGHTS ON THESE POINTS.) IN SHORT, WE ARE NOW REASONABLY CONVINCED THAT MANLEY WILL GO TO ALMOST ANY LENGTH TO STRENGTHEN HIS PROSPECTS FOR REELECTION. THE AGEE AFFAIR IS SOLID SUPPORT FOR THIS ASSUMPTION.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, SEAGA KNOWS HIS COUNTRY JAMAICANS. WHILE MANLEY'S MACHINATIONS MAY BE EFFECTIVE IN THE CITIES, SEAGA HAS PREDICATED HIS CAMPAIGN ON THE BASIC SENSE AND SKEPTICISM OF THE RURAL JAMAICAN WHEN IT COMES TO RAZZLE-DAZZLE PNP POLITICS. "THE MAN HE NO TELL DE TRUT." IS, SEAGA SAYS, THE COMMON RURAL APPRECIATION OF MANLEY. SEAGA SET OUT TO VISIT ONE THOUSAND COMMUNITIES. HE SAYS HE HAS VISITED EIGHT HUNDERED AND FIFTY TO DATE. THIS IS GRASSROOTS POLITICS. IN MY CURRENT VIEW, THE ELECTION IS AGAIN A HORSE RACE WITH CLOSE ODDS. SEAGA HAS COME UP WITH SOME GOOD CANDIDATES. MANLEY MAY HAVE THE EDGE BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE CONTROLS THE SECURITY

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MECHANISM AND ALSO CONTROLS OR INFLUENCES MUCH OF THE NEWS MEDIA.
GERARD

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